



# **News Release**

## **IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**

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### **Water Supply Committee Forecasts Grim Outlook**

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The prospect that Idaho faces a sixth straight year of drought is almost certain according to members of the Idaho Water Supply Committee, which met today at the Idaho Water Center in Boise.

Snow pack levels are down significantly in most parts of Idaho, and it will be almost impossible to make up the difference this late in the water accumulation season.

Upper Snake River Basin snow pack levels are about 70% of average. Boise and Payette Basin snow levels are only about 65% of average. The picture looks even bleaker in Northern Idaho where the snow pack is only about half what it should be. The Bear River Basin is the only exception; snow levels there are 97% of normal.

Forecasters say the lack of moisture will keep the Upper Snake River reservoir system from filling again for the fifth straight year and stream flow levels in the river's Hells Canyon reach are less than 50% of normal. Idaho Power representatives told committee members that means the company will have to go out on the open market and buy power in order to meet its customer's needs this year.

There is one bit of good news to report. It appears the El Nino weather pattern that has kept storms out of Idaho this winter, may be breaking down, hopefully easing the state's forecasted drought somewhat as spring draws near.

The Water Supply Committee includes water managers and hydrology experts from both the public and private sector and will meet again next month.

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